

# **FOLLOW THE RAINBOW TO BETTER HEALTH WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

## **Section 1: Introduction to Fruits and Vegetables**

### **How many fruits and vegetables should you eat in a day?**



The average American eats just three servings of fruits and vegetables a day. With various recommendations, it can be confusing to know just how many fruits and vegetables you should eat. Just remember: when it comes to fruits and vegetables, more is better.

### **Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables**



Fruits and vegetables not only taste good, but they are also good for you. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure; prevents some types of cancer, gastrointestinal ailments, and protects against certain diseases of the eye, like macular degeneration and cataracts.

AND when you replace high fat and high calorie foods with lots of fruits and vegetables you may lose weight.

So reach for an orange instead of a cookie and enjoy your good health!

## **Heart Disease and Stroke**



Want to lower risk of heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure? The more fruits and vegetables that you eat, the lower the risk of heart disease. Remember: more is better.

## **Cancer**



Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables everyday may lower your risk of developing certain cancers of the mouth, esophagus, stomach, colon, lung, ovary and kidney.

## **Gastrointestinal Health**



Fresh fruits and vegetables are naturally high in fiber. The skin on most fruits and vegetables, like grapes and apples, are high in fiber. As fiber passes through your digestive tract, it absorbs water and expands. This helps to keep your digestive tract healthy.

### Better Vision

Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables also keeps your eyes in good shape. Many fruits and vegetables contain vitamin A, which helps night vision. Dark green leafy vegetables, like spinach and collard greens, also contain chemicals that protect the eyes from damage.



A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains may reduce the chances of getting diseases of the eye, like macular degeneration and cataracts.

### Weight Loss



To lose weight, you must eat fewer calories than your body uses. It's that simple. Replacing high calorie foods with fresh fruits and vegetables is an important part of any weight loss plan. Fruits and vegetables are lower in calories than many other foods. Substitution is the key.

## **Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)**

**Choose a bag of carrots instead of a small bag of chips.**



By filling up on delicious fresh fruit and vegetables instead of cookies, candy, sodas, and chips you can fill yourself up and lose weight. Choose smarter snacks and you can decrease calories and add important nutrients.

**Choose a terrific Red Delicious apple instead of a tiny Snickers bar.**



Between-meal hunger can lead to overeating at mealtimes. Avoid overeating and high-fat, high-sugar snacks by planning smart snacks for you and your family.

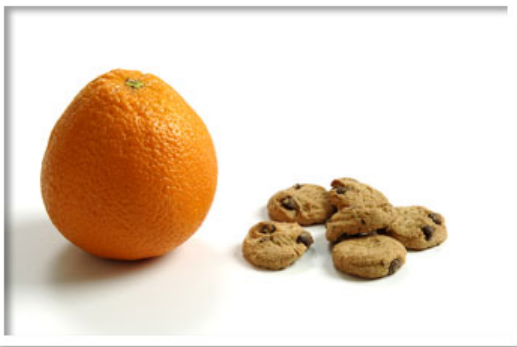
### **Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)**

**Choose a tasty fruit smoothie made with whole fruit, ice cubes, and low-fat yogurt instead of a can of soda.**



Snacks that are high in fat and sugar are also usually low in nutrients. Choose smarter snacks, like a fruit smoothie or a cup of yogurt, that are packed with vitamins and minerals.

**Choose a fantastic orange instead of a few cookies.**



Not only do fresh fruits and vegetables taste good, they will fill you up better than a measly cookie.

The Harvard School of Public Health provides more information about the benefits of fruits and vegetables. [Click to visit their web site.](#)

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## Section 2: Follow the Fruit and Vegetable Rainbow

### Follow the fruit and vegetable rainbow to better health.

Fruits and vegetables come in many different colors. The varieties of colors provide a wide range of nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C.

Fruits and vegetables also contain numerous **phytochemicals**, such as lutein, anthocyanins, lycopene, allicin, and carotenoids.



Phytochemicals are special chemicals found in fruits and vegetables that give them color and smell and provide many health benefits.

Colorful examples include:

**Green** - broccoli, green apple, kiwi, spinach, turnips, collard greens

**Orange** - tangerine, sweet potato, carrot, cantaloupe

**Purple** - blueberries, passion fruit, raisins, purple cabbage

**Red** - strawberries, tomato, persimmon, red pepper



## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

### Vary your veggies.



Aim for 3 cups a day, but don't let the amount overwhelm you. Just remember: More is better. Make vegetables a regular part of all your meals - even snack time!

#### What counts as a cup?

- 1 cup of vegetable juice
- 2 cups of raw leafy greens
- 1 cup raw, cooked, mashed, or chopped vegetable
- 1 cup cooked beans, split peas, or lentils

### Focus on fruits.



Try to have 2 cups a day. Breakfast, snack time, and even dessert. Fresh fruit is fantastic anytime!

#### What counts as a cup?

- 1 cup of fruit, cut into pieces
- 1 medium piece of fruit - apple, peach, banana, or orange
- 3 plums, apricots, or kiwis
- ½ cup of dried fruit



## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

### Sample Menus

The following menus show just how easy it can be for you to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.

#### Breakfast (2 Fruits)

- 1 cup dry cereal
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 6 ounces of orange juice
- 1 banana



#### A.M. Snack (1 Vegetable)

- 2 large carrots



#### Lunch (1 Vegetable, 1 Fruit)

- Turkey sandwich
- Whole grain bread
- Lettuce, tomato and onion
- 1 small bag of pretzels
- 1 cup grapes



#### Afternoon Snack (1 Fruit)

- 1 apple



#### Dinner (2 Vegetables)

- 1 baked chicken breast
- ½ cup brown rice
- 1 cup green beans
- 2 cups mixed greens salad
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt



## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

### Breakfast (3 Fruits)

- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ cup raisins
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 6 ounces of apple juice
- 1 orange



### Morning Snack (2 Fruits)

- 1 cup cantaloupe
- 1 banana



### Lunch (2 Vegetable, 1 Fruit)

- ½ cup spaghetti
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- 1 cup summer squash medley
- 1 cup strawberries
- 1 cup low-fat yogurt



### Afternoon Snack (1 Fruit, 1 Vegetable)

- 1 apple
- 2 celery stalks

### Dinner

#### (1 Vegetable, 1 Fruit)

- 2 beef enchiladas
- ½ cup brown rice
- ½ cup pinto beans
- 2 cups mixed greens salad
- 1 slice banana bread
- 1 cup low-fat milk

## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

### Snack Attack



Fresh fruit and vegetables on the go can really help you make smart and healthy snack choices. Stop the fast food temptation! Snack smart!



Fruits and vegetables are easy to grab and go and cost a lot less than fast food, chips, and candy. Fruit and vegetables are always satisfying.

Examples of smart snacks at home or on the go include: bananas, apples, oranges, grapes, carrots, and celery.

Snacking on lots of fruits and vegetables will fill you up and keep you from eating too much at mealtime.

### Fruits and Vegetables: The Smart Snacks



One tiny snack-sized bag of corn chips (1 ounce) has 153 calories and 10 grams of fat.

For the same number of calories and ZERO fat, you can have 2 large carrots AND one large apple. Wow!

## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

### Try something new every day of the week.

There are so many different fruits and vegetables that you could try a new one every day for a year and never eat the same one. Try:

- mangoes or mustard greens on Monday.
- tangerines or tomatoes on Tuesday.
- watermelon or winter squash on Wednesday.
- turnips on Thursday.
- figs or fava beans on Friday.
- sapote or spinach on Saturday.
- star fruit or string beans on Sunday.



### 25 Ways to Get More Fruit and Vegetables into Your Life

- Add blueberries to a breakfast smoothie.
- Add lettuce, tomato, or cucumbers to a sandwich.
- Make a Waldorf salad with apples, celery, walnuts, and dressing.
- Keep fresh fruit on your desk at work.
- Order a side salad instead of French fries.
- Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf or casseroles.
- Add chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers, onions, and jalapenos.



## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

- Include cooked dry beans or peas in chili.
- Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables, like broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, or red pepper strips in a see-through container in the refrigerator.
- Set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks
- Try one new fruit or veggie every month.
- Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.
- Top your cereal with bananas, berries or peaches; add blueberries to pancakes.
- Bake banana or zucchini bread.
- Try low-fat yogurt with fruit mixed in.
- Include mandarin oranges or grapes in a tossed salad.
- Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.
- Add fruit like pineapple or peaches to barbecue kabobs.
- Have baked apples, pears, or a fruit salad for dessert.
- Grill tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and onions as part of a barbecue meal.
- Frozen 100% juice bars make healthy alternatives to high-fat snacks.
- Spread peanut butter on apple slices.
- Choose raisins, apricots or other dried fruits instead of candy.
- Start a garden; grow green beans, Brussels sprouts, peppers, mustard greens.



## Breastfeeding Moms (After You Deliver)

**You did it!**



Hopefully, this lesson has given you some ideas to think about when making healthy meal decisions.

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